

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

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R 021525Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5733

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL DOUALA BY POUCH

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE YAOUNDE 1487

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, CM

SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION AND IMPENDING CABINET CHANGES

REF: YAOUNDE 653

1. FOLLOWING PRESIDENT AHIDJO'S REELECTION APRIL 5 TO FOURTH FIVE-YEAR TERM, INAUGURATION CEREMONY NOW SCHEDULED FOR MAY 5. OATH OF OFFICE TO BE TAKEN BEFORE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, WHICH CONVOKED INTO SPECIAL SESSION OPENING MAY 3.

2. MAIN PURPOSE OF SPECIAL SESSION, ASIDE FROM INAUGURATION CEREMONY, IS TO AMEND CONSTITUTION TO CREATE POST OF PRIME MINISTER AS CALLED FOR BY AHIDJO AT UNC PARTY CONGRESS IN FEBRUARY. ASSEMBLY PRESUMABLY WILL GO THROUGH MOTIONS OF STUDYING AND DISCUSSING PRESIDENT'S PROPOSAL BEFORE ADOPTING IT. SESSION COULD LAST SEVERAL DAYS OR EVEN LONGER.

3. GENERAL ASSUMPTION IS THAT AHIDJO WILL WASTE LITTLE TIME IN NAMING NEW PRIME MINISTER, CERTAINLY BY MAY 20 NATIONAL DAY. HE ALSO EXPECTED CONCURRENTLY OR SOON THEREAFTER ANNOUNCE MAJOR CABINET RESHUFFLE TO REVISE MINISTERIAL TEAM WHICH WITH ONLY MINOR CHANGES HAS BEEN IN PLACE SINCE

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UNITARY REPUBLIC CAME INTO BEING IN MID-1972.

4. MINISTER OF STATE SECRETARY GENERAL AT PRESIDENCY PAUL BIYA STILL REGARDED AS MOST LIKELY NOMINEE FOR PRIME MINISTER. VIRTUALLY ALL OTHER POSSIBLE NAMES--AND SOME SEEMINGLY IMPOSSIBLE ONES, INCLUDING MOST PROMINENTLY EX-OAU SEC GEN NZO EKANGAKY--HAVE ALSO MADE WAY INTO LOCAL RUMOR MILL AS POSSIBLE NOMINEES AT ONE TIME OR OTHER DURING PAST FEW MONTHS.

5. EMBASSY REITERATES PREVIOUS COMMENT (REFTEL) THAT QUESTIONS OF WHO BECOMES PRIME MINISTER AND WHO ENDS UP WHERE IN NEW CABINET ARE OF ONLY LIMITED SIGNIFICANCE SINCE (A) AHIDJO HAS DEFUSED IN ADVANCE ANY NOTION THAT NEW PRIME MINISTER IS TO BE REGARDED AS EVENTUAL PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESSOR AND (B) MINISTERS ARE NOT RPT NOT LIKELY TO EMERGE AS POWER WIELDERS. ANY NEW MINISTERIAL TEAM WILL HAVE TO RETAIN ESSENTIAL REGIONAL AND ETHNIC BALANCE. AT SAME TIME, CABINET

CHANGES MAY SHOW REGARD FOR YOUTH AND INCREASING EMPHASIS ON TECHNICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMPETENCE, AT LEAST IN KEY DEVELOPMENT-RELATED FIELDS.

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